

Staging Sells It Better
Creating a more pleasant and profitable selling experience

What kind of selling experience do you want to have? The real estate market has changed in the last year. There are so many properties on the market right now that buyers can take their time to choose from a number of options in their price range and target area, including models in new home developments. It is important to make sure that your property stands apart from the competition in appearance and value.

Gone are the days when multiple offers flood into each seller's hands, and high asking prices seem standard. But I am constantly surprised when I hear about price reductions week after week in Realtor meetings. To me this indicates one of two things – Either the house was overpriced to begin with, or it wasn't properly prepared before it was put on the market for sale (sometimes, of course, it's both). Neither should occur when sellers enlist the expertise of real estate professionals to help sell their house.

The comparative market analysis that your Realtor provides not only tells you at what price houses similar to yours sold for and how long they were on the market, but also shows the houses that did not sell, and why. There are essentially five ingredients that create the right recipe for sale: Location, appearance and condition, terms, competition, and price. Overpricing limits exposure and disappoints buyers because they are expecting more from the property, so it's important to make sure that you're not the only person willing to pay your asking price. You may have added a pool or spa, hung modern light fixtures, or painted your dining room a warm shade of red that you've enjoyed for years, but these are not necessarily things that a potential buyer will find valuable for their own lifestyle.

Whether you're ready to sell now or in a few years, a stager can help determine what upgrades are going to increase your equity. A detailed report from an accredited stager highlights improvements that you the homeowner can enjoy every day while stretching out your financial obligations. People often deprive themselves of simple changes as though they don't deserve to spend the money on themselves, and then rush to make those enhancements for the next family just prior to selling. Though many home improvement expenses can have a tax advantage when it comes time to sell, do make sure that they also have translatable benefits because everyone has a different lifestyle and what you love may be another family's deal breaker.

A HomeGain Survey of 2000 real estate agents nationwide found that moderately priced home improvements, ranging from \$80-\$2,800, yielded the highest returns upon the actual. Landscaping, kitchen and bath upgrades, and staging can bring a nearly 300 percent rate of return on your investment.

While everyone has heard the term staging by now, the benefits continue to amaze even those Realtors who use it for every listing. The idea is to make the property shine from top to bottom, and attractive for the widest buying market. With home prices in California as high as they are, buyers want their purchases to be for the best product at the best price that also meets nearly all their expectations.

It is important to have all your ducks in a row before anyone sees the house, so that when it goes on tour, the Realtor's first impression is a good one and prompts immediate calls to their potential buyers. The cost of staging is always less than a price reduction, and an investment in your equity. A Stager will help you to look through the clutter of your daily life and at your property through the eyes of a buyer. Stagers can pick out the little details that homeowners overlook after years of living there. Stagers will tell you what cost effective improvements will bring the highest rate of return while keeping as many of your preparation dollars as possible in your pocket. De-cluttering and rearranging your furniture and accessories can be an amazing, simple, and inexpensive transformation that makes your house look more like a model home. Buyers want to move in to a "new" house, not one that that feels worn and dated.

If your house is priced correctly and looks fabulous then you will reach the widest target market for your property. The longer your property stays on the market, the less interest it will receive and the more likely you'll have to reduce the price. With the amount of inventory on the market today, it is vital to be properly prepared.

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